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Trump administration plans to review refugees admitted under Biden, memo obtained by The AP says

By **REBECCA SANTANA** and **ELLIOT SPAGAT**
Associated Press
WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration plans a review of all refugees admitted to the U.S. during the Biden administration, according to a memo obtained Monday by The Associated Press, in the latest blow against a program that has for decades welcomed people fleeing war and persecution into the country.

The review is likely to sow confusion and fear among the nearly 200,000 refugees who came to the United States during that period. It is likely to face legal challenges from advocates, some of whom said the



President Donald Trump talks after meeting with New York City Mayor-elect Zohran Mamdani in the Oval Office of the White House, Friday, Nov. 21, 2025, in Washington.

Associated Press.

card approvals for refugees who came to the U.S. during the stated time period.

If the agency determines that a person shouldn't have qualified for entry as a refugee, the person "has no right to appeal," according to the memo, although if they are put in removal proceedings and sent to immigration court, they can then plead their case there. The memo also stated that even those who have already received their green card would be reviewed.

"USCIS is ready to uphold the law and ensure the refugee program is not abused," Edlow wrote.

People admitted to the U.S. as refugees are required to apply for a green card one year after they arrive in the country and usually five years after that can apply for citizenship.

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, the Department of Homeland Security and the White House did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

The moves described in the memo are the latest to take aim at the refugee program, which the administration suspended earlier this year and later set a limit for entries to 7,500 mostly white South Africans a historic low of refugees to be admitted to the U.S. since the program's inception in 1980.

The Trump administration more broadly has ramped up immigration enforcement as part of its promise to increase deportations of illegal immigrants.

The Biden administration admitted 185,640 refugees from October 2021 through September 2024. □

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move was part of the administration's "cold-hearted treatment" of people trying to build new lives in the U.S.

The memo, signed by the director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Joseph Edlow, and dated Friday, said that during the Biden years "expediency" and "quantity" were prioritized over "detailed screening and vetting."

The memo said that warranted a comprehensive review and "re-interview of all refugees admitted from January 20, 2021, to February 20, 2025."

The memo indicated that there will be a list of people to re-interview within three months.

Advocates of the refugee program say that refugees are generally some of the most vetted of all people coming to the United States and that they often wait years to be able to come.

The memo also immediately suspended green

U.S. Sen. Jim Justice of West Virginia agrees to pay nearly \$5.2M in overdue personal taxes

By JOHN RABY
Associated Press

CHARLESTON, W.Va. (AP)

— U.S. Sen. Jim Justice of West Virginia has agreed to pay nearly \$5.2 million in overdue personal taxes, the latest saga for the former billionaire who has been followed by a trail of financial challenges going back well over a decade. An attorney for Justice and his wife, Cathy, entered into a joint motion for consent judgment with the federal government Monday, the same day that the government filed a lawsuit saying that the couple “have neglected or refused to make full payment” for the income taxes dating to 2009. An attorney for the U.S. Justice Department’s tax division signed off on the agreement.

Justice had a fortune estimated at \$1.9 billion last decade by Forbes magazine, which stripped his billionaire title in 2021, when Justice’s worth had dwindled to an estimated \$513 million. Earlier this year, Forbes estimated that Justice’s net worth had disintegrated to “less than zero” due to liabilities that far exceeded assets.

A spokesperson for Justice’s office didn’t immediately respond to an email seeking comment Tuesday.

During a briefing with local media in October, Justice asserted that his companies “are complicated and complex” and that his children “are doing a magnificent job” running them. He then repeated past assertions that collection efforts against him were politically motivated, before concluding: “At the end of the day, I’d say just let it be and see how it all plays out.”

Justice, a former two-term Republican governor who owns dozens of businesses that include coal and agricultural operations, was elected last November to the Senate. He took over the seat vacated by the retiring Joe Manchin, a Democrat who became an independent in 2024 near the end of his second



Sen. Jim Justice, R-W.Va., listens as President Donald Trump speaks during an event on energy production in the East Room of the White House, April 8, 2025, in Washington.

Associated Press.

full term.

Justice still has other financial challenges to work out. The Internal Revenue Service last month filed liens totaling more than \$8 million against Justice and his wife on unpaid personal taxes. In September, state tax officials filed \$1.4 million in liens against the Justice family’s historic hotel, The Greenbrier, and the resort’s Greenbrier Sporting Club, over unpaid sales taxes.

Last month, a foreclosure auction on several hundred lots owned by the Justice family at a resort community near Beckley was paused. The auction centered on a dispute between the Glade Springs Village Property Owners Association and Justice Holdings over unpaid fees. The state Supreme Court plans to review the case more closely.

In 2021, the IRS filed liens over \$1.1 million in unpaid taxes on the Greenbrier Hotel and an additional \$80,000 on the resort’s medical clinic. Those debts were paid off later that year.

Justice’s family settled debts last year in a separate case to avoid the Greenbrier Hotel’s foreclosure. The 710-room hotel, which has hosted U.S. presidents, royalty and

congressional retreats, had come under threat of being auctioned off on the steps of a Lewisburg courthouse. That was after JPMorgan Chase sold a long-standing loan taken out by Justice to a credit collection company, Beltway Capital, which declared it to be in default.

The state Democratic Party has said efforts to seize the hotel from Justice were “a direct consequence of his own financial incompetence.”

Last year, a union official at the Greenbrier said that Justice’s family was at least \$2.4 million behind in payments to an employees’ health insurance fund, putting workers’ coverage at risk. □

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Fritz Alphonse Jean, an economist and former central bank governor, who replaced Leslie Voltaire in the rotating presidency of the transitional presidential council, speaks during his installation ceremony in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, March 7, 2025.

Associated Press.

US sanctions high-ranking Haitian official and accuses him of supporting gangs

By **DÁNICA COTO**

Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP)

— The U.S. government imposed visa restrictions on Fritz Alphonse Jean, a member of Haiti's transitional presidential council, accusing him of supporting gangs and other criminal organizations in a move expected to deepen the country's political instability. The U.S. did not name the person it sanctioned in its announcement late Monday, but Jean confirmed it was him, telling The Associated Press on Tuesday that he rejected those accusations.

The U.S. also accused Jean of obstructing Haiti's fight against "terrorist gangs," without details. Gangs control 90% of Haiti's capital and swaths of territory in the center of the country, where they extort businesses, kill civilians and fight for territory, using military-grade weaponry.

Haiti is due to hold elections by Feb. 7, when the nine-member council is supposed to step down. Critics have asserted that some council members are seeking to stay in power beyond that date and are looking for a new prime minister who would support

those plans.

Jean dismissed that assertion, saying the council wants to fight gangs and corruption.

"Once we started reviewing the possibilities of changing the head of government, members of (the council) started receiving threats of visa cancellation and other sanctions from the U.S. Embassy representative and the Canadian ambassador," Jean said. He said the envoys clearly stipulated that "if we do not desist, we will face sanctions and visa cancellation." Jean added: "We stand firm on combating corruption, state capture by few individuals, and operators involved in drugs trafficking, weapons and ammunition's proliferation." Jean is an economist and former central bank governor who once served as president of the transitional presidential council. The council was formed after former Prime Minister Ariel Henry resigned last year following widespread gang attacks, leaving Haiti without a leader. The office of Haiti's current prime minister, Alix Didier Fils-Aimé, did not immediately return a request for comment.

The visa sanctions against

Jean came less than a week after U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Christopher Landau warned on social media that there were "calls for open war against the central government" in Haiti. "The US and other countries in the region and around the world have a clear message: enough with gang violence and destruction and political infighting. Now is the time for Haiti's leaders to unite against a common threat, and anyone who obstructs Haiti's path to political stability must expect consequences from the US and others, including visa revocations," Landau wrote on Nov. 19. Haiti's prime minister and the transitional presidential council have been under pressure to hold elections before the council's mandate expires. But gang violence has made that deadline impossible to meet. Haiti's Provisional Electoral Council has set tentative election dates for August and December of next year. The country hasn't held elections in almost a decade, and no one has been president since former President Jovenel Moïse was fatally shot at his private residence in July 2021. □

Closing statements begin in ICC trial of alleged Central African Republic militia commander



Mahamat Said Abdel Kani enters the court room of the International Criminal Court in The Hague, Netherlands, Sept. 26, 2022.

Associated Press.

By **MOLLY QUELL**

Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — Prosecutors at the International Criminal Court on Tuesday began presenting closing arguments against an alleged commander of a rebel group from Central African Republic facing multiple counts of crimes against humanity and war crimes.

Mahamat Said Abdel Kani is accused of overseeing torture, persecution and enforced disappearances at detention centers in the capital, Bangui, in 2013, where fighting raged between his predominantly Muslim Seleka rebels, who had seized power from then-President Francois Bozize, and a mainly Christian militia called the anti-Balaka.

"Women, children, the elderly and disabled people fell victim to the horrific acts of abuse and violence committed by the Seleka amongst many victims," deputy prosecutor Mame Mandiaye Niang said. Women were raped in front of their husbands and children and detainees were tortured, he said.

Said pleaded not guilty to all charges when the proceedings began. His defense team argued the evidence against him was unreliable and insufficient to connect the 55-year-old to the crimes.

"The prosecution has built its case on a biased and sketchy narrative very far from the reality of what actually happened in the Central African Republic at the time," lawyer Jennifer Naouri said in opening statements in 2022. The defense team will give closing statements later this week.

If convicted, Said faces a maximum sentence of life imprisonment.

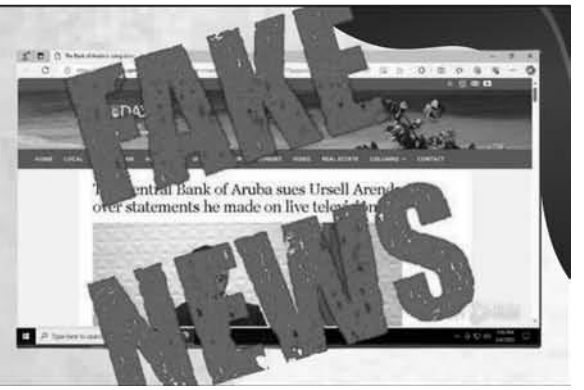
Two senior leaders in the anti-Balaka were convicted in July on multiple counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity. Several others have been tried at a specially created court in Central African Republic. The closing statements bring to an end the last active trial underway at the global court.

Judges will rule on Friday whether to release former Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte from custody. His lawyers say the octogenarian is in frail health and his condition is deteriorating in the court's detention unit. Last week, prosecutors asked for a life sentence for a leader of a Janjaweed militia convicted in October for atrocities committed in the Sudanese region of Darfur. □

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Amnesty accuses Sudanese paramilitary group RSF of committing war crimes in Darfur city of el-Fasher

By SAMY MAGDY
Associated Press

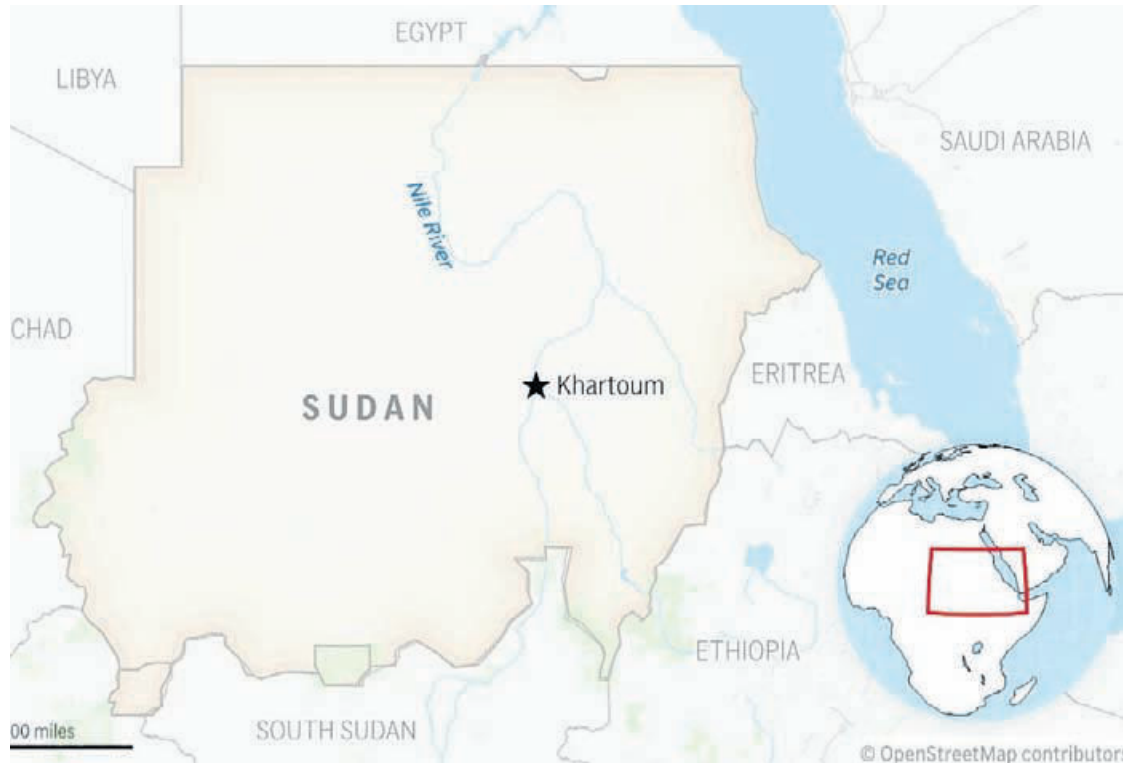
CAIRO (AP) — Amnesty International on Tuesday said that atrocities committed by a Sudanese paramilitary group in a Darfur city constituted war crimes, the latest such accusation in the country's devastating war. In a report, the international rights group said that it gathered testimony describing barbarities carried out by the Rapid Support Forces, or RSF, when its fighters wrestled control of el-Fasher, the capital of North Darfur province, from the army late last month. Executions and rapes. The group said that the atrocities included executing dozens of unarmed men, and raping women and girls.

Amnesty said that other people were taken hostages by RSF fighters for ransom, and that witnesses said they saw "hundreds of dead bodies left lying" in the city's streets and on main roads out of el-Fasher. "This persistent, widespread violence against civilians constitutes war crimes and may also constitute other crimes under international law," said Agnès Callamard, Amnesty's secretary-general.

The RSF didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

The group has acknowledged that some of its fighters committed violations in the city and vowed to investigate.

The RSF, which has been at war with the Sudanese military for more than 2½ years, seized el-Fasher late in October after more than an 18-month siege. The city was the military's last stronghold in the sprawling



This is a locator map for Sudan with its capital, Khartoum.

Associated Press.

region of Darfur.

Survivor accounts

Witnesses told The Associated Press last month that RSF fighters went house to house, killing civilians and committing sexual assaults. The World Health Organization says that gunmen killed at least 460 people at a hospital, and abducted doctors and nurses.

Amnesty said in its report that the group's researchers spoke with 28 survivors who managed to flee el-Fasher.

The witnesses described "witnessing groups of men shot or beaten" and the taking of hostages for ransom.

The group said that RSF fighters sexually assaulted women and girls. It cited one woman who said that she and her 14-year-old daughter were raped by RSF fighters on Oct. 27 while they were trying to flee the city.

The woman said her

daughter's health condition deteriorated and she died in a clinic in Tawila, a town around 60 kilometers (37 miles) west of el-Fasher, which has become a hub for those fleeing RSF atrocities, according to Amnesty. Another 29-year-old woman said that she was one of 11 women taken by RSF fighters and raped while they were attempting to flee the city on Oct. 26. She said she was raped three times by a fighter, while another one watched.

"The world must not look away as more details emerge about the RSF's brutal attack on el-Fasher," said Callamard, calling for holding accountable all those responsible for committing atrocities.

Criticism of UAE

She lashed out at the United Arab Emirates over its alleged support of the RSF, which she said "is fueling a relentless cycle of violence against civilians in Sudan."

"These atrocities were facilitated by the United Arab Emirates' support for the RSF," she said.

The UAE has long denied the accusation.

Truce proposal

U.S. adviser for African affairs Massad Boulos told reporters in Abu Dhabi on Tuesday that the Sudanese army and the RSF haven't formally accepted the Quad's proposal for a humanitarian truce.

The Quad, which is made up of mediators from the U.S., Saudi Arabia, Egypt and the United Arab Emirates, have been trying to bring the war to an end and potentially paving the way for a democratic transition, which was hampered by a military coup in 2021. The latest proposal calls for a three-month humanitarian truce followed by a nine-month political process. Boulos said during a joint news conference with top UAE adviser Anwar Gar-

gash that the warring parties were repeatedly urged to accept this humanitarian truce presented as it is, without any preconditions. On Sunday, Sudan's top army Gen. Abdel-Fattah Burhan rejected the ceasefire proposal, saying in a video released by the military that it was unacceptable and "the worst yet," accusing the mediators of being "biased" in their efforts to end the war. The following day, RSF commander Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo, said in a video message posted on Telegram that the paramilitary agreed to a three-month humanitarian truce to facilitate aid deliveries.

The war's background

Sudan's war began in April 2023 over a power struggle between the military and the RSF.

The conflict has killed more than 40,000 people a figure rights groups consider a significant undercount and has created a grave humanitarian crisis, with more than 14 million people displaced.

The RSF is largely made up of fighters from the Arab Janjaweed militia, which is accused of carrying out a government-backed genocidal campaign in Darfur in the 2000s in which around 300,000 people were killed.

The group has been accused of a series of atrocities over the course of the current war, and the Biden administration, in one of its last decisions, said that the RSF committed genocide in Darfur.

The military has also been accused of atrocities but not to the same level of the paramilitary force. □

Ethiopian volcano subsides, leaving a trail of disruption and canceled flights

By **AMANUEL GEBREMEDHIN BIRHANE** and **RAJESH ROY**
Associated Press

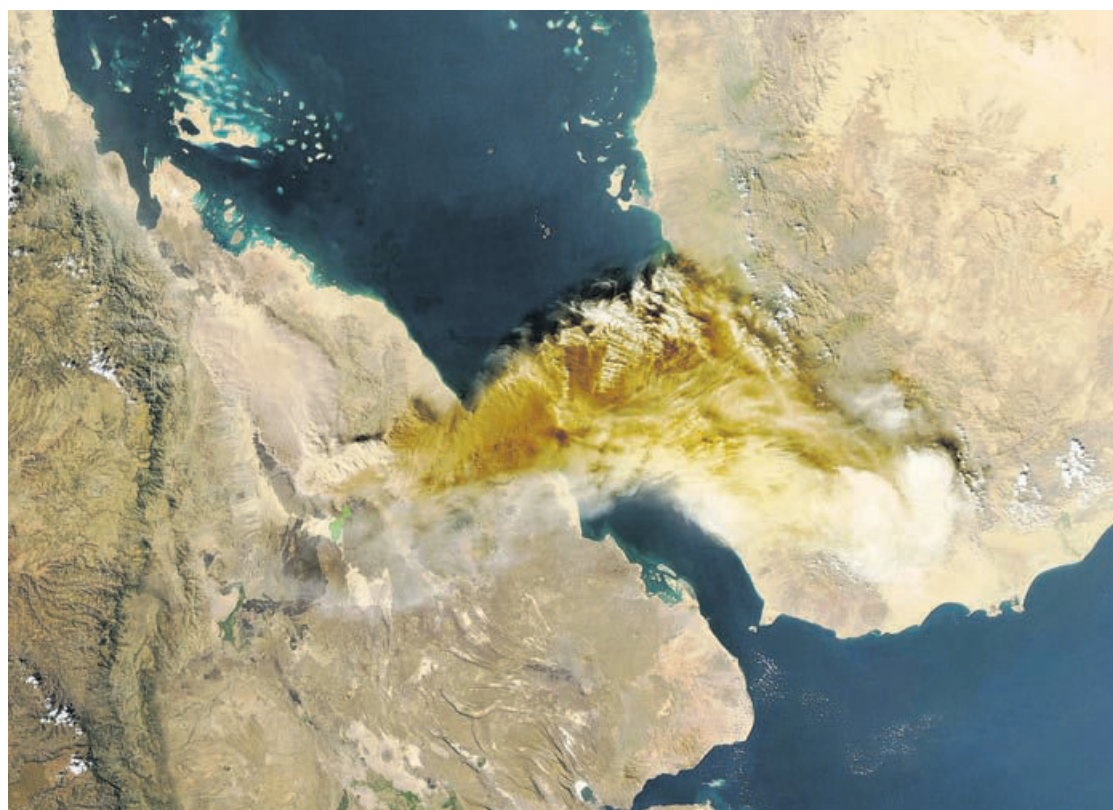
ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia (AP)

— Volcanic activity in northern Ethiopia's long-dormant Hayli Gubbi volcano subsided Tuesday after an eruption over the weekend that left a trail of destruction in nearby villages and caused flight cancellations after ash plumes disrupted high-altitude flight paths. Villages in the district of Afdera in the Afar region were covered in ash, officials said residents were coughing, and livestock found their grass and water totally covered.

Airlines cancelled dozens of flights scheduled to fly over affected areas as the meteorological department said the ash clouds were expected to clear later on Tuesday.

India's flag carrier, Air India, said it canceled 11 flights, most of them international, on Monday and Tuesday to inspect aircraft that may have flown over affected areas, acting on a directive from India's aviation safety regulator.

Another Indian operator,



This satellite image released by NASA Worldview shows the Hayli Gubbi volcano in Ethiopia erupting on Nov. 23, 2025.

Akasa Air, said it had canceled flights to Middle East destinations such as Jeddah, Kuwait, and Abu Dhabi scheduled over the past two days.

At least seven international flights scheduled to depart from and arrive at the Indira Gandhi International Air-

port in the Indian capital of New Delhi were canceled on Tuesday, while at least a dozen were delayed, according to an official at the airport.

An official in charge of health in northern Ethiopia's Afdera district, Abe-della Mussa, said the resi-

dents were coughing and mobile medical services from the larger Afar region had been launched in the remote area.

"Two medical teams have been dispatched to the affected kebeles (neighborhoods) like Fia and Nemma-Gubi to provide mobile

medical services," he said. Another official in charge of livestock, Nuur Mussa, said animals were unable to find clean water or grass. "Many animals, especially in the two affected kebeles, cannot drink clean water or feed on grass because it is covered by volcanic ash," he said.

Atalay Ayele, a geologist at Addis Ababa University, said such eruptions occur because Ethiopia is situated along an active rift system where volcanism and earthquakes are frequent. "This is the first recorded eruption of Hayli Gubbi in the last 10,000 years," he told the AP. "It will likely continue for a short period and then stop until the next cycle."

The ash cloud is moving towards China and is expected to clear Indian skies by 1400 GMT Tuesday, the India Meteorological Department said in a statement. The high-level winds carried the ash cloud from Ethiopia across the Red Sea, Yemen, Oman, the Arabian Sea and then towards western and northern India, the weather office added. □

Associated Press

Vatican answers African bishops concerned about polygamy with document praising monogamous marriage

By **NICOLE WINFIELD**
Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — The Vatican on Tuesday doubled down on the value of monogamous marriage

between a man and woman, responding to concerns raised by African bishops about the practice of polygamy in their flocks.

The document from the

Vatican's doctrine office said the Catholic Church had a well-documented position upholding the indissolubility of marriage as a lifelong union between spouses. But it said the church's position on the unique and exclusive nature of a monogamous marriage was less well known.

In recent years at Vatican meetings of bishops, African delegates have regularly complained that polygamy is widely practiced among their flocks and asked the Vatican for guidance.

"A Dear One: In Praise of Monogamy" provides them with a doctrinal document tracing the way marriage has been treated in the Bible, poetry, Christian theol-

ogy and philosophy and by various popes and church councils across history.

The document is 40 pages long with 256 footnotes and written only in Italian. In the introduction, the Vatican's doctrine chief and author, Argentine Cardinal Víctor Manuel Fernández, says it's enough to read the final chapter, on "conjugal charity" and the conclusion, to take away its essential message.

Catholic doctrine holds that the sacrament of marriage is a lifelong, exclusive union between man and woman, open to new life.

The final section of the new document deals with sexuality, procreation and sexual attraction between couples and recalls Fernández's previous writings on

the topic.

When the Argentine theologian was appointed by Pope Francis in 2023, he came under fire from conservatives who had unearthed an out-of-print book of his, "Heal Me with Your Mouth. The Art of Kissing." A year later, another out-of-print Fernández title and similar in tone, "The Mystical Passion: Spirituality and Sensuality," caused a stir. The short expose about mystical-sensual experiences with God delved into orgasms, including graphic descriptions of male and female sexual anatomy and his commentary about sexual desire, pornography, sexual satisfaction and domination, and the role of pleasure in God's mystical plan. □



Cardinal Victor Manuel Fernandez delivers his speech during a mass on the sixth of nine days of mourning for late Pope Francis, in St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican, May 1, 2025.

Associated Press.



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Visit the historic museum at Fort Zoutman!

(Oranjestad)—Located in the middle of downtown Oranjestad, situated right next to the government building “Cocolishi”, is one of the oldest buildings of Aruba: Fort Zoutman. First constructed in 1796, this site has been used (or left unused) in many ways and have survived eras of war and attempted dismantling.

When anyone refers to Fort Zoutman, they are actually referring to two separate buildings that, over the years, have been merged: the fort and the tower. That's right, the iconic 5-story, squared tower was not part of the original structure of the fort, and is actually called “Willem III Toren”. Constructed in 1867, this tower was named after the then-reigning king of The Netherlands, Willem III. Willem III Toren was originally a light tower, but after a request from Lieutenant Gov-

ernor Jan Helenus in 1866, it also became a bell tower.

The fort itself was originally constructed to protect the commerce bay of Paardenbaai from pirates and other disreputable characters roaming the Caribbean Sea. Unlike the Willem III Toren, Fort Zoutman had a more tumultuous past, including the on-and-off reception of unwanted members of the English military several times (The Netherlands was at constant war with England back in the colonial era).

Over the years, both the fort and the tower had functioned as different government center points, including a tax and stamps office. For some time these two buildings also housed a police precinct and jail, and even experienced abandonment until the Cultural Center Aruba Foundation

(CCA) petitioned for its renovation in 1964, turning the site into the Historic Museum it currently is.

Despite its small size, The Historic Museum guards a rich depository of the commercial, military and social history of Oranjestad, offering a glance into how the social culture of the town came to be. If you are interested in history and want to learn more about Aruba, then Fort



Zoutman should definitely be included into your itinerary.

and Saturday from 10am-2pm. ☐

The museum is open Monday to Friday from 9am-6pm,

Source: The Old Fort of Aruba by Jan Hartog.

Prohibited by law: leaving the island with seashells, white sand or corals

(Oranjestad)—Often times, the customs department at the airport intercepts many tourists leaving the island with seashells, white sand and/or corals as souvenirs.

Conforming to the international treaty of CITES and our local law which protects our Flora & Fauna, it is absolutely prohibited to take any seashell, sand and coral outside of Aruba. This is to protect our environment. The high number of seashells, coral and amount of sand confiscated is very strange and it is suspected that our own locals are the ones selling these to the tourists, which is unacceptable.

Upon confiscation at the airport, you can also face a fine that you have to pay before leaving. This would surely not be a pleasant experience. Though we love to accommodate our visitors, let's all give nature the respect it deserves by protecting our environment. Stop collecting seashells, white sand and corals from our shores and stop buying or accepting these from local sellers or companies.

We want our future generations and visitors to enjoy the beauty of our beaches, shells and corals in a sustainable way, without destroying or disrupting the Aruban ecosystem. Help us protect what is ours! ☐



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Don't forget to visit Aruba's famous Red Anchor

At the south east coast of the island, standing alone on a windswept and barren land stands a popular Aruba landmark – a large anchor. It overlooks the sea just beyond, watching over the shipping lanes. It stands there in memory and in honor of all seamen who have lost their life at sea.

Where to find the anchor?

The anchor is a "must see" landmark when you visit Aruba. It is among the most photographed historical landmarks for the island. You want to make sure you add this stop on your itinerary when you're visiting the south coast of Aruba. The bright red anchor against the backdrop of the deep blue Caribbean Sea and the azure blue skies, make a great backdrop for your vacation pictures.

The anchor is located at the entrance to Gate 6 to the former Lago Colony. It is on the outskirts of Seroe Colorado, on the south east point of the island at the "T" junction to Baby Beach.

Depending on where you are staying on the island, follow the signs that indicate the way to Baby Beach. Once you reach the T-junction, it will be right in front of you.

About the anchor

Size

It will be hard to miss the anchor, it's huge! The anchor that weighs 21,772 kilos is approximately 10 feet 6 inches wide and 15 feet, 6 inches tall.

On the anchor there are some numbers. The 4112 and 4115, which are believed to be the serial numbers that refer to the "fluke" or horizontal and vertical parts of the anchor, respectively. The number 21772K refers to the weight of the anchor in kilos.

This type of anchor was manufactured by Hoesch Dortmund Horde, at a foundry located in Germany.

Where did the anchor come from?

There are a number of stories as to the origins of the anchor, which one do you think it was? (Unfortunately the mystery has never been solved, so your imagination can pick which one you think it might be!)

Story 1:

"According to Mr. Manuel M. Curiel, an ex-Lago Tug Captain, a fully laden VLCC (Very Large Crude Carrier) was seeking a mooring at the 15-mile anchorage, known as Bara, on the southern part of the island. This is the usual shallow mooring location for ships awaiting orders, etc. The weather was rough with strong current. The



normal procedure is that they would walk out three shackles (about 90 feet) until the anchor touches the bottom while the chain must rest on the bottom. Subsequently, they will walk out some extra shackles and when the ship starts to swing or lean on one side, the anchor is properly set. Because of the rough weather, unfortunately they did not get the time to walk out the extra tackles and because of the tension exerted on the winch, it broke, and they lost the anchor and its chain."

Story 2:

"Mr. Curiel also said that at one time a small tanker with a Korean crew, while lifting their anchor also lifted another anchor near the inner harbor. When the ship asked for assistance, he went with his tugboat along with a barge, to help. But eventually they had to cut the chain and let the anchor go to the bottom because they could not untangle them."

How did the anchor become a landmark?

Sometime between 1980 and 1985, three gentlemen (Mr. Wim Martinus – the Harbormaster of Aruba; Mr. August Genser – the ex-Division Superintendent of Lago's Laboratory; and Mr. Willie Davis), were having a conversation with Mr. Charlie Brouns Jr., local businessman. Char-

lie, who was a visionary and had dreams for developing the San Nicolas area, told these gentlemen that he would like to come up with something innovative for the San Nicolas area to draw tourism to the area.

The "anchor", which at that time was being stored at the Oranjestad harbor, was suggested as an option. Charlie liked the idea! He then contacted the President of Lago for permission to acquire the anchor. He was granted permission and the anchor was then relocated to its present location and dedicated "To All Seamen" on the occasion of the closing of the Lago Oil Refinery on March 31, 1985.

The best time to visit

When you're planning your visit to the south end of the island, you will want to include in your itinerary the many things to see and do there. The anchor will be just one of these stops, (keep an eye out for our future editions, we publish our recommendations!).

With that being said, I have to say, if you enjoy catching a sunrise, the anchor is one of the best places on the island to catch the sunrise. But in reality, anytime is a good time to visit, depending on your personal schedule.☐

Visit the natural pool; Conchi!

(Oranjestad)—Amongst the countless beaches surrounding the island that are well-known and frequently

PSA from the Aruba Conservation Foundation:

How to behave when you see a “lora”

(Oranjestad)— The conservation of the Yellow-Shouldered Amazon, also known as the ‘Lora,’ relies on how we act as humans. We’ve seen many hikers who’ve encountered the ‘Lora’ in our protected nature areas and we can certainly imagine the pride and joy it brings to any Aruban. However, not everyone may know how to behave when encountering these clever and social birds. This guide is here to explain the behaviors that will most effectively help us in our efforts to conserve the ‘Lora.’ Please, don’t just read but also follow these guidelines so we can ensure the survival of these birds for future generations.

No interfering, please

Please refrain from interfering with the “Lora”. The Lora is a highly intelligent and social animal, perhaps slightly too friendly because they have gotten used to the rangers as they prepared for their reintroduction. However, it is our collective responsibility to help them adapt to the wild once again. Please play your part by not interfering (calling, provoking etc.) with the Lora. Simply enjoy their beauty from a safe distance.

Be respectful and keep cats and dogs away

Pets and strays such as cats and dogs are prone to attacking other animals, especially birds, as part of their natural instincts. Please make sure your pets are kept inside of your yard or are kept on a leash when going out for a walk.

Do not feed them food or water

You may think that giving the any food or water is doing a good deed, but it actually does not contribute to them developing survival skills in the wild. By interfering with the survival instincts of wild animals, we are doing the opposite of helping. Therefore, please do not attempt to give the Loras food or water.

Capturing a Lora is against the law!

The biggest threat to the Lora before their extinction in 1947 was caused by human activities including poaching and killing of the Lora. Let’s work collectively to prevent this from happening again. So when you see the Lora, enjoy their beauty from a distance and admire them as they flourish in the wild.□

visited, there is a hidden natural pool situated in the northern coast of the island, Conchi.

Conchi (Natural Pool)

For many years, Conchi was the only natural pool that we had on the island. Located in the Arikok National Park, near Boca Keto and the Daimari Ranch, Conchi—also known “Cura di Turtuga (Turtle’s Cove) or just Natural Pool—is reachable with any 4×4 vehicle or by foot if you’re up for a long hike. However, since it is part of the National Park, you must first get permission from park management to enter. You would have to purchase a day pass, and receive a wristband as proof of payment. Once you’ve completed that, you are set!



If you decide to hike from the entrance of the Arikok National Park, this is also possible: do bring plenty of protective clothing and enough water and food—it could take you up to three hours to hike there!

However, when you eventually do get there, you will be greeted with crystal blue water surrounded by a natural rock formation that protects you from the

wild waves on the other side. Though the pool is located on the northern side of the island (where the sea is largely rough and largely no suitable for swimming), the pool itself is very calm. It’s also relatively deep, and you can climb up the rocks and jump in!□

Picture is credited to Rocka-Beach Tours.

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Article by Etnia Nativa

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EpisodeCCCXXXI-331

Tor di Suerte — The Green Beetle of Our Island

The narrative of Etnia Nativa—which means Native Ethnicity—highlights the importance of recovering and preserving Aruba's authentic cultural identity and its unique heritage. Through this platform, readers can experience an authentic native perspective that both educates and inspires a growing "island caretaker mindset."

In this episode, we explore a folkloric version of the island's green beetle.

In our region, as in many Native American cosmologies, large beetles are seen as symbols of resilience, hard work, and determination. They are often associated with creation, protection, and strength—much like the Cherokee tale of the Great Water Beetle, who plunges its legs into the primordial sea and draws up the mud that becomes the Earth.

Our native ancestors said that, in the beginning, when Aruba was just emerging from the sea, the island's spirits shaped the creatures that would keep it alive. Some were made as tall as cacti, others as swift as lizards. The last creatures they molded, however, were the smaller ones—like our beetle, just about an inch long, with a shiny metallic green shell, two tiny horns shaped like crescents, and the strength of ten animals combined. They named it Tor di Suerte, the "good luck beetle," or bakator on our sister island Curaçao—the one who pushes the earth as cattle push through weeds.

The Tor di Suerte is a Caribbean beetle belonging to the "Cotinis" family; it symbolizes strength, earth spirits, rebirth, and protection. Its small horns and remarkable ability to move objects have earned it names such as "Toro" and "Toro Verde."

Our Caquetian ancestors admired animals of exaggerated strength. Green beetles were also likened to cattle or wild bulls, capable of pushing, lifting, and defending. Burrowing creatures like the Tor di Suerte



were associated with the underworld, earth spirits, and the cycle of plant renewal. When they emerge after the rains, they are seen as heralds of rebirth and fertility.

During one long drought, when the earth was parched and roots clung tightly, Tor di Suerte dug and pushed with all its might. Stones pressed down, roots held him back, yet he persisted—not in anger, but with unwavering determination. In the end, his labor allowed the rain to return, the earth to soften, and the vegetation to flourish once again. From that time forward, it has been believed that if a green Tor enters a home, a woman of the family may become pregnant—a gift of fertility from the spirits of the earth.

In regions where the dry seasons are harsh, the appearance of these beetles is a sign of incoming moisture, the renewal of life, and the return of abundance. Beyond their symbolic power, Tor di Suerte is also considered a spiritual guardian of the home and a bringer of good luck, hence its name.

When the first rains moisten the earth and the Tor emerges, its bright green shell glistening in the sunlight, it reminds us that even the smallest spirit can restore the balance of nature.

Note: The word "tor" is a Dutch term referring to a beetle.

Explore Aruba's Roots at Etnia Nativa

If you've enjoyed discovering our ancestral stories and wish to delve deeper into the true identity of the Aruban people, we invite you to experience Etnia Nativa—the only "living museum" of its kind in the Caribbean, celebrating the island's rich mestizaje (cultural blending).□

Founded in 1994, Etnia Nativa has been a cultural pioneer—co-founding Aruba's National Park, the Archaeological Museum, artisan foundations, and several grassroots initiatives dedicated to heritage and conservation.

But Etnia Nativa is more than a place—it's a keyhole, a gateway. Quietly tucked away near the high-rise hotels, this private residence is a cultural sanctuary few tourists ever imagine discovering—and that's precisely its magic. Intentionally intimate and off the beaten path, it welcomes only those with a genuine curiosity and a thirst for authentic discovery.

Connect with the spirit and soul of Aruba's ancient heritage through a one-of-a-kind experience unlike anything else on the island.

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The Aruban Cunukero: From past to present



(Oranjestad)—Aruba's culture consists of rich historical traditions that make up the Aruban identity and lifestyle. However, the life of the cunukero (farmer) is perhaps the most important aspect of our culture, in a sense representing to locals the true essence of the Aruban.

Historically, cunucus (farms) played a huge role in the early social and economic development of Aruba, and its relevance dates back to the early days of the colonization era. Upon being discovered by Spanish conquistadors in the late 15th century, Aruba was used primarily as a ranch, housing horses and cattle brought from Europe. During the Dutch colonization era where the West Indian Company (WIC) dominated the economic sphere on the island, using the land to set up cattle farms and ranches remained popular.

Anthropologist Sidney Mintz divided Caribbean farmers back in four categories:

- The "squatters", who were mostly comprised of illegal and poor colonists, runaway slaves and deserters who took advantage of the Spanish's weak supervision on Caribbean islands like Cuba and the DR;
- Then you have "Early Yeomen", who were legal farmers who came to the west under contract. Once their contract expired, they were given a plot of land for independent use;
- Proto-Peasants were plantation slaves who were allowed to have a small piece of land to grow food for their own consumption. This was to curb the cost of living on the plantations;
- Lastly you have the "Runaway Peasantries", usually comprised of runaway slaves who acquired farming tools and cattle through stealing or through secret exchanges with other slaves from different plantations.

However, the Aruban cunukeros back then are hard to place, and their history may explain

why.

From 1636 (beginning of Dutch colonization era) to before the oil industry in 1924, Aruba's population consisted of mostly farmers. These farmers were mostly indigenous and were characterized as peasants. They weren't allowed to participate in trading, but instead were granted a piece of land to live off of. However, in exchange for this grant, these indigenous farmers were obligated to work for the WIC, doing daily tasks such as taking care of or hunting cattle—large majority of which were destined for Curacao, clean water tanks and chop wood, among other things.

As much as these farmers were given to opportunity to live "free" with a plot of land, their exclusion from the trading and business world, as well as being deprived the chance to become real property and cattle owners, made them a unique group among Caribbean farmers at the time.

The WIC placed a lot of restrictions on these indigenous farmers—a method to safeguard their cattle deposit on the island. The indigenous farmers were mostly granted less than 7 acres of land. Those who owned bigger land were either once affiliated with the WIC or were colonists who settled on the island to try their luck at farming. In 1767, there were about 120 houses/cunucus on the island.

These Aruban farmers were also limited to the amount of cattle they could keep. Most kept goats as cattle, as only those who were affiliated with the WIC could keep (more) sheep. Of the 76 goat herders on the island, about 45 of them had less than 30 goats, and only 7 of them had more than 60 goats.

It wasn't until the WIC was defunct in late 18th century that these farmers were able to obtain more freedom as cunukeros. After 1824, the

government gave these farmers official permission to keep livestock, and the obligations once placed on them were officially discarded.

Because of the dry climate in Aruba, growing food for commercial purposes was not popular. The focus was mainly on cattle herding and taking care of livestock. However, livestock need food to survive, and when Aruba experienced its duper dry climate, many farmers would see a big loss in their livestock, and hence profit.

Although the WIC at one point did try to come up with an initiative to get more people to have land on the island, the climate never really allowed real profit from farming. Because of the climate, Aruban farmers in general could not keep large quantities of livestock. At a certain point toward the end of the 18th century, the climate got so bad that many farmers decided to leave the island for a while.

For this reason, the farming economy on the island remained small. As the years went by and people noticed that these farms could not really produce any sustainable profit, farmers kept their small piece of land just to live off of. This is why the Aruban cunukeros only played a very tiny role into the plantation economy.

In modern Aruba, cunucus and cunukeros still exist on the island, fortunately with more freedom and more opportunity to tap into the agricultural market. These farmers usually sell their produce on a smaller scale, like during farmers' market events and other types of (holiday) events.

Source: "Arubaans Akkoord: Opstellen over Aruba van voor de komst van de olieindustrie (Aruban Accord: Essays on Aruba Before the Arrival of the Oil Industry)" by Alofs, Luc; Rutgers, Wim; Coomans, Henny E. red. □

CROSSWORD

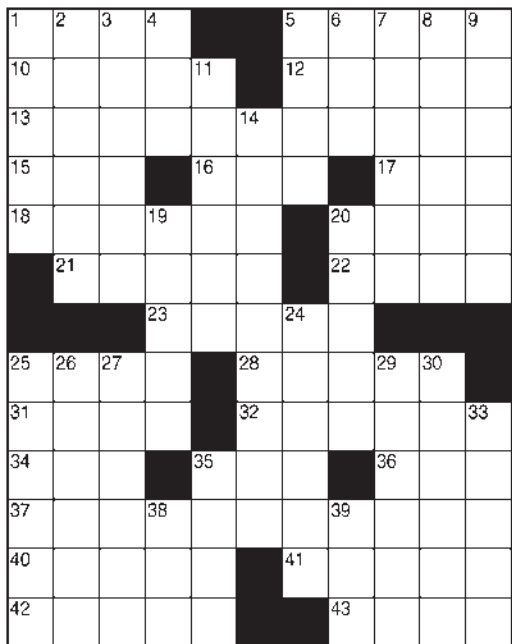
By THOMAS JOSEPH

ACROSS

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33 Actions
35 Tiny
38 Pulled off
39 Trip



A XYDLBAAXR
is LONGFELLOW

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

12-5

CRYPTOQUOTE

YNKFWFJD NIJ WFAJ YMZRJ —

KVDEWX DUJJE, UFEP N YJU

CMED. — WJD ZNUDVC

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			ARR	DEPT	BERTH	CALLS
SUN	23	MSC DIVINA FREEWINDS - Dept.	08.00 ****	18.00 22.30	C E	1 -
TUE	25	WIND SPIRIT CARNIVAL HORIZON	06.00 09.00	15.00 23.00	B C	1 1
WED	26	SERENADE OF THE SEAS FREEWINDS	08.00 06.00	23.00 ****	C E	1 1
THU	27	AIDABLU BRILLIANCE OF THE SEAS	08.00 08.00	18.00 ****	B C	 1
FRI	28	SILVER SHADOW BRILLIANCE OF THE SEAS - Dept.	08.00 ****	**** 18.00	B C	1
SAT	29	SILVER SHADOW - Dept. SEVEN SEAS SPLENDOR	**** 14.00	13.00 23.59	B C	 1
SUN	30	FREEWINDS - Dept.	****	22.30	E	-

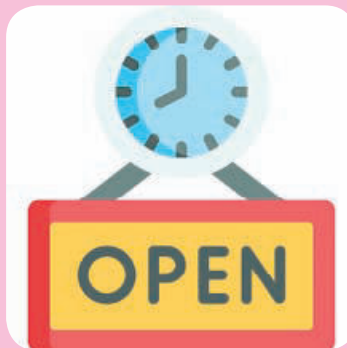
Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic but important information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.



Safety

Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occur, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.



Supermarket hours

Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 8 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.



Electrical power

Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of outlets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.

SUDOKU

To play sudoku, use logic to fill the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the numbers 1-9 only once. Puzzle difficulty increases from Monday to Sunday.

King Classic Sudoku



Difficulty: ★★★

11/26

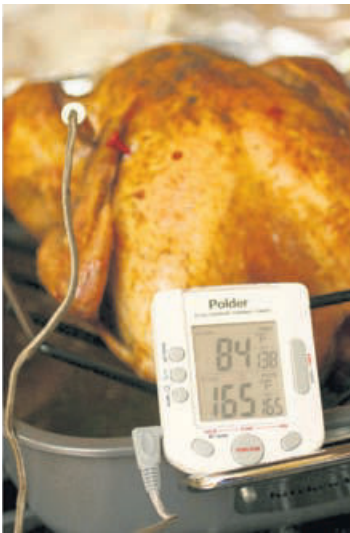
Answer to previous puzzle

8	6	2	9	1	4	3	5	7
1	9	3	2	7	5	4	8	6
5	7	4	3	8	6	9	2	1
3	4	9	7	5	2	6	1	8
6	5	8	4	9	1	2	7	3
7	2	1	6	3	8	5	4	9
2	1	6	8	4	3	7	9	5
4	8	7	5	6	9	1	3	2
9	3	5	1	2	7	8	6	4

Difficulty: ★★

11/25

These 6 kitchen tools can make or break your Thanksgiving dinner



A turkey is roasted with the help of a thermometer on Oct. 18, 2007.

Associated Press

By **JONEL ALECCIA AP**
Health Writer
Associated Press

It's the start of Thanksgiving week, the time when home cooks across America suddenly recognize the daunting task ahead.

More than 90% of people in the U.S. celebrate the food-centric holiday and more than 1 in 4 attend meals that include more than 10 other people, according to the Pew Research Center.

Under that kind of pressure, what host wouldn't want the best tools to make sure the holiday dinner goes off without a hitch?

With that in mind, we asked national food safety experts which kitchen devices and aids are essential to ensure a safe and

tasty Thanksgiving meal.

Here are their top four suggestions for aids that can make or break your holiday dinner, plus two bonus tips for after the meal:

Digital meat thermometer

Our panel of experts unanimously agreed that an instant-read digital thermometer is vital to making sure roast turkey and other dishes reach 165 degrees Fahrenheit (74 degrees Celsius) to eliminate the risk of food poisoning from germs like salmonella and Campylobacter.

"This is non-negotiable," said Darin Detwiler, a Northeastern University food safety expert. "A reliable thermometer ensures you're not guessing, because guessing is not a food safety strategy."

Color-coded cutting boards

In the hustle of a holiday kitchen, the risk of cross-contamination is real. That's when germs from one food, such as raw turkey, may be spread to other foods, such as fresh vegetables or fruits.

It's best to use dedicated cutting boards for each type of food, and color-coding red for meat, yellow for poultry, green for veggies can help, said Barbara Kowalczyk, director of the Institute for Food Safety and Nutrition Security at George Washington University. "I try not to use

wooden cutting boards," said Kowalczyk, noting that they can retain bacteria that thrive and grow to large enough quantities to cause illness.

Sharp knives

As an emergency medicine doctor who has stitched up many Thanksgiving injuries, Dr. Tony Cirillo urges home cooks to make sure their kitchen knives are sharp.

A sharp knife cuts cleanly, while a dull knife requires more pressure that can cause dangerous slips, said Cirillo, president of the American College of Emergency Physicians. □

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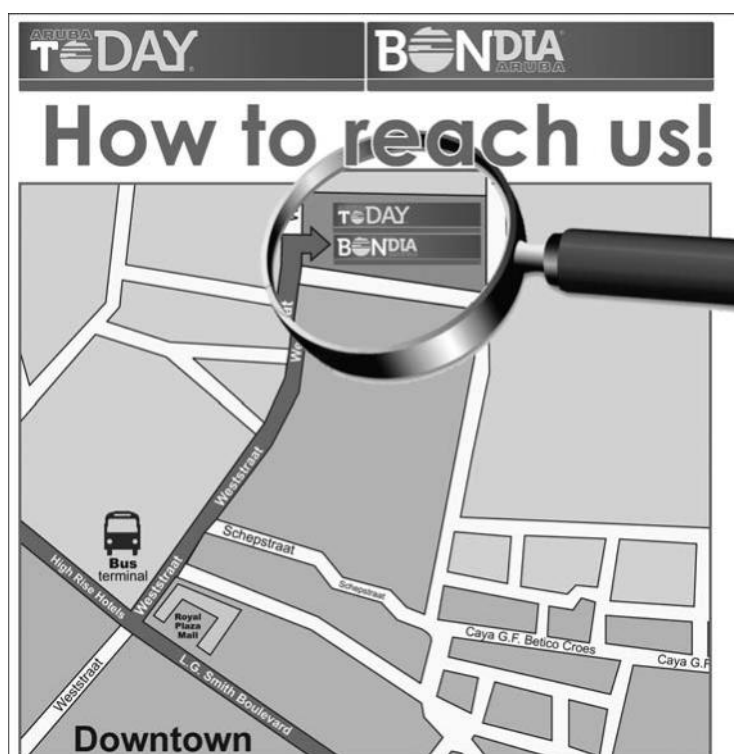
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ARUBA TODAY NEWS



Christian McCaffrey's big night leads 49ers to 20-9 victory over Panthers

By JOSH DUBOW AP Pro Football Writer
Associated Press

SANTA CLARA, Calif. (AP) —

Christian McCaffrey maintained that playing Carolina for the first time since the Panthers traded him to San Francisco three years ago wouldn't raise his level of urgency one bit.

McCaffrey responded to the reunion game like he does almost every week, with a productive performance that led the 49ers to another win.

McCaffrey gained 142 yards from scrimmage and scored a touchdown, and San Francisco overcame a rough performance by quarterback Brock Purdy to beat the Panthers 20-9 on Monday night.

"Obviously when you see familiar faces, it's always good to see them before the game and after the game," McCaffrey said. "But that's a completely new team than when I was there. So it's really just business once the ball was snapped."

McCaffrey's big night helped the 49ers (8-4) overcome three interceptions in the first half by Purdy to remain in playoff position heading into the stretch run of the season.

Bryce Young and the Panthers (6-6) struggled to take advantage of their opportunities a week after he threw for a franchise-record 448 yards in a win



San Francisco 49ers running back Christian McCaffrey runs for a touchdown against the Carolina Panthers during the second half of an NFL football game, Monday, Nov. 24, 2025, in Santa Clara, Calif.

at Atlanta. Young threw for 169 yards with one touchdown and one interception as Carolina missed a chance to move into sole possession of first place in the NFC South.

Purdy wasn't much better in his second start back from a toe injury as he became the first player this season to throw three interceptions in the first half of a game. Purdy said neither the toe nor rust was an issue.

"Honestly, the decisions of going to those spots, I was fine with," he said. "It's just the execution of throwing a better ball. I feel like on really all of them, I needed

to just drive the ball a little bit more. I kept it up in the air too long on multiple of them." The 49ers went conservative in the second half after Purdy's rough start to the game, relying mostly on McCaffrey and short passes. The strategy worked with McCaffrey scoring on a 12-yard run to make it 17-3 and the Niners adding a field goal by Matt Gay. Young did connect on one big play, a 29-yard TD pass to Tetairoa McMillan, but Carolina couldn't convert on 2-point try after a penalty moved the ball to the 1. Young then threw his second interception of the

game to Ji'Ayir Brown with Carolina in scoring position with a 20-9 deficit.

"Just lack of execution," Young said. "Couple of plays I'd like to have back, some stuff we could do better. Not what we wanted. We didn't do good enough and I take ownership of that."

The frustration from the loss contributed to a spat, with Carolina safety Tre'Von Moehrig hitting San Francisco receiver Jauan Jennings in the groin after a run play late in the game and Jennings responding with a punch to the helmet after the game. "I was just re-

sponding to some childish behavior," Jennings said.

McCaffrey, who has transformed the 49ers' offense since being acquired in October 2022, finished with 89 yards rushing and 53 receiving for his 10th 100-yard game of the season two shy of the franchise record he set in 2023.

The 49ers gave the ball to McCaffrey on the first five plays, leading to the first opening-drive TD of the season against Carolina. Purdy connected on a 12-yard pass to Jennings for the score.

The two offenses did nothing after that. Jaycee Horn had two of Carolina's three picks of Purdy, but the Panthers turned those takeaways into only three points. Young ruined one drive when he was intercepted by Brown on a first-down play from the 1.

"I like the call," coach Dave Canales said. "It was an aggressive call, a play action that we had opportunities on. Unfortunately came out with an interception."

The teams traded field goals and the Niners led 10-3 at the half.

Injuries
Panthers: Horn and LB Claudin Cherelus left the game in the first half with concussions and didn't return. ... G Chandler Zavala (calf) and CB Corey Thornton (ankle) both left in the second half and didn't return. □

Associated Press.

Cristiano Ronaldo set to avoid ban at World Cup after FIFA red-card verdict offers probation

By Associated Press

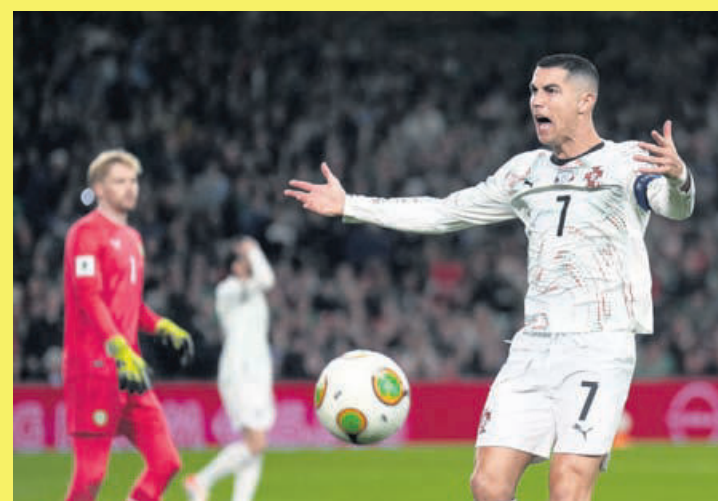
MIAMI (AP) — Cristiano Ronaldo will likely avoid missing any Portugal games at the World Cup despite his red card in a qualifying game for elbowing an Ireland opponent.

FIFA published a disciplinary verdict Tuesday that imposed a three-game ban, yet with two of those games deferred for a one-year probation period.

Ronaldo served a mandatory one-game ban when Portugal played its final qualifying game last week a 9-1 win over Armenia that sealed its place at the World Cup in North America.

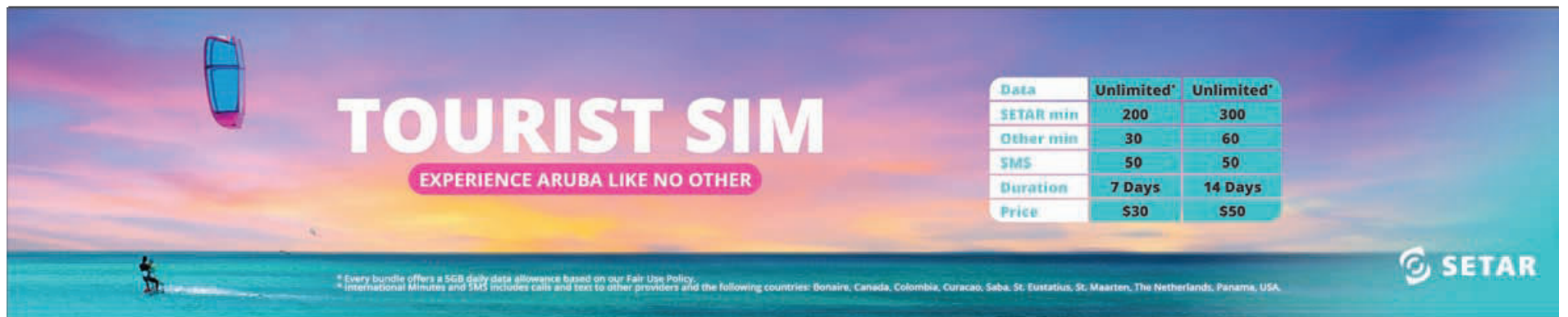
The superstar had been expected to be banned for at least one more game and start what will be his record sixth World Cup on the sidelines.

Ronaldo swung an arm and struck Ireland defender Dara O'Shea with an elbow during a 2-0 loss in Dublin two weeks ago. The FIFA verdict comes six days after Ronaldo met U.S. President Donald Trump at the White House for a formal dinner with Saudi Arabia's crown prince Mohammed bin Salman. Ronaldo has played in the Saudi league for three years for a club majority owned by the Saudi sovereign wealth that the prince chairs. □



Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo reacts during a World Cup 2026 group F qualifying soccer match between Ireland and Portugal in Dublin, Thursday, Nov. 13, 2025.

Associated Press.



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SETAR

European tour season begins in Australia two weeks after the previous season ends

By The Associated Press

European tour and PGA Tour of Australasia

BMW Australian PGA Championship

Site: Brisbane, Australia.

Course: Royal Queensland GC. Yardage: 7085. Par: 71.

Prize money: A\$2 million (\$1.29 million). Winner's share: A\$333,333 (\$215,600).

Television: Wednesday-Saturday, 8-9:30 p.m. (NBC Sports app), 9:30 p.m. to 1 a.m. (Golf Channel).

Defending champion: Elvis Smylie.

Race to Dubai champion: Rory McIlroy.

Last tournament: Matt Fitzpatrick won the DP World Tour Championship.

Notes: This is the first tournament of the 2025-26 season on the European tour, coming two weeks after Rory McIlroy was crowned Race to Dubai champion. ... The field features three of Australia's major champions in Geoff Ogilvy, Adam Scott and Cam Smith. Ogilvy is the International captain for next year's Presidents Cup. ... Smith is down to No. 345 in the world ranking. He did not finish better than a tie for fifth last year on LIV Golf. ... Nine players from LIV Golf are in the field, which includes Abraham Ancer, Joaquin Niemann and Josele Ballester, who won the Saudi International last week. ... Marco Penge, who is joining the PGA Tour next year from his second-place finish in the Race to Dubai, is playing the European tour opener. ... Former NCAA champion Fred Biondi is in the field after the Brazilian made it through European tour Q-school to get his card. ... The tournament is co-sanctioned by the European tour and the PGA Tour of Australasia.

Next week: ISPA Handa Australian Open.

Online: <https://www.europeantour.com/dpworld-tour/> and <https://golf.com.au/>

PGA Tour

Last week: Sami Valimaki won the RSM Classic.

Next tournament: Sony Open on Jan. 15-18.

FedEx Cup champion: Tommy Fleetwood.

Online: <https://www.pgatour.com/>

LPGA Tour

Last week: Jeeno Thitikul won the CME Group Tour Championship.

Next tournament: Hilton Grand Vacations Tournament of Champions on Jan. 29-Feb. 1.

Race to CME Globe champion: Jeeno Thitikul.

Online: <https://www.lpga.com/>

Other tours

Ladies European Tour: Andalucia Costa del Sol Open de Espana, Real Guadalhorce GC, Malaga, Spain. Television: Thursday-Saturday, 8-11 a.m. (Golf Channel); Sunday, 7:30-10:30 a.m. (Golf Channel). Defending champion: Carlota Ciganda. Online: <https://ladieseuropeantour.com/>

Japan Golf Tour: Casio World Open, Kochi Kuroshio CC, Kochi, Japan. Defending champion: Hiroshi Iwata. Online: <https://www.jgto.org/en/>

Asian Tour: Bharath Classic 2025 Gujrat, Kensville Golf Resort, Ahmedabad, India. Defending champion: New tournament. Online: <https://asiantour.com/>

Sunshine Tour: Fitch and Leedes PGA Championship, St.

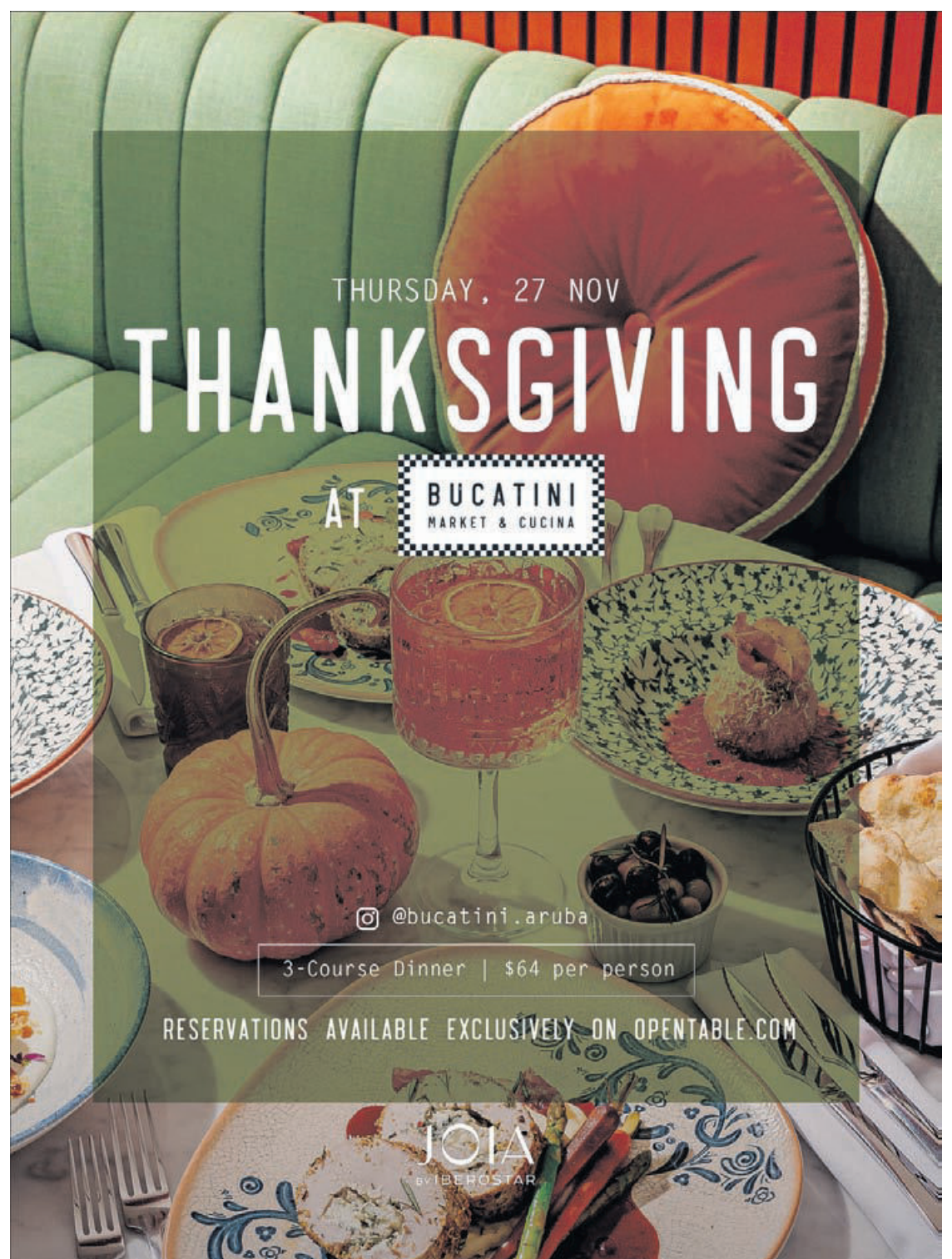
Francis Links, St. Francis Bay, South Africa. Defending champion: Peter Moolman. Online: <https://sunshinetour.com/>

Japan LPGA: JLPGA Tour Championship Ricoh Cup, Miyazaki CC, Miyazaki, Japan. Defending champion: Shiho Kuwaki. Online: <https://www.lpga.or.jp/en/>



Marco Penge of England hits off the first tee during the first round of World Tour Golf Championship at Jumeirah Golf Estates, in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Thursday, Nov. 13, 2025.

Associated Press.



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Praying for the sun: What to know about the flame-lighting ceremony for the Winter Olympics

By **DEREK GATOPOULOS**
and **LEFTERIS PITARAKIS**
Associated Press

ANCIENT OLYMPIA, Greece (AP) — At a temple in Ancient Olympia, a flame is drawn from the sun to begin its journey to the Winter Games. The choreographed ceremony inspired by ancient Greece is designed to link the original games to today's global competition.

On Wednesday, the flame will be kindled once more for the Milan Cortina 2026 Winter Olympics. From Olympia birthplace of the ancient games to Milan's San Siro Stadium on Feb. 6, the torch will cross Italy's cities, and cultural landmarks, carried by thousands of re-



Greek rower and bronze medalist Petros Gaidatzis, left, and actress Mary Mina portraying the High Priestess, perform during the final rehearsal ahead of the flame lighting for the Milan Cortina 2026 Winter Olympics, at the archaeological museum of Olympia, Greece, Tuesday, Nov. 25, 2025.

emony is a meticulously choreographed performance led by the actors and dancers playing the role of a high priestess and her ensemble of priestesses and male kouroi.

The selection of the performers, their costumes and choreography are all inspired by the ancient aesthetic. Practicing for weeks, performers learn to coordinate precise gestures, sculptural poses, and synchronized movements across Ancient Olympia's uneven ground.

At the culmination of the ceremony, the high priestess calls for a moment of "sacred silence" before the torch is lit.

In Greek, she recites an invocation to the ancient gods: "Apollo, god of sun and the idea of light, send your rays and light the sacred torch for the hospitable cities of Milan and Cortina. And you Zeus give peace to all peoples on earth and wreath the winners of the sacred race."

10,000 torchbearers ready for Italian tour

The flame is carried by a torch relay to the host city, occasionally making a spectacular detour: It's been taken undersea, beamed into space, and guided to the summit of Mount Everest.

The time, it will tour Greece for a week and spend the night at the Acropolis in Athens before a handover ceremony to Winter Games organizers on Dec. 4 and embarking on an Italian adventure.

Starting in Rome, the 63-day Italian relay will stretch across 12,000 kilometers, pass through 60 cities, cross all 110 provinces, and put a spotlight on dozens of world heritage sites.

Approximately 10,000 torchbearers will participate, leading up to the opening ceremony of the Feb. 6-22 games at San Siro stadium in Milan.

Every Olympics gets its own torch for the relay. The sleek "Essenziale" was crafted in Italy to promote sustainability. □

Associated Press

lay runners.

Here's a look at how the ceremony unfolds, the challenges it faces, and where both the Olympic and Paralympic flames will travel in the months ahead. It's all about the weather. The first modern Olympic Games were held in Athens in 1896 but the flame was introduced later and only standardized in the 1930s using a method that hasn't changed since. A concave mirror concentrates sunlight onto the tip of a torch, producing a flame that represents purity and continuity with the Games' ancient roots.

The main challenge is the weather: No direct sunlight, no flame. Cloudy skies have forced organizers in the past to rely on a backup, a pre-lit flame produced during rehearsals. Copies of the flame are kept handy in a lantern throughout its journey so torches that occasionally go out mid-relay can be discreetly relit.

Protests staged by activists have disrupted past relays, notably ahead of the Beijing Olympics, prompting tighter security.

Torch relays after the 2008 Games were limited to Greece and the host country.

A high priestesses and help from Apollo Central to the lighting cer-

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